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Surface-Induced Dissociation of
Multiply-Protonated Peptides

by

Ashley L. McCormack, Jennifer L. Jones, Vicki H. Wysocki

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Virginia Commonwealth University
Department of Chemistry
Richmond, VA

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Surface-Induced Dissociation of Multiply-Protonated Peptides

Ashley L. McCormack[§], Jennifer L. Jones, Vicki H. Wysocki

Department of Chemistry
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Va 23284-2006

* Author to whom correspondence should be addressed

§ Present address: Division of Biology, 139-74, California Institute of Technology
Pasadena, CA 91125

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Abstract

We report here surface-induced dissociation spectra of three multiply-charged peptides: doubly-protonated angiotensin I, doubly-protonated renin substrate, and triply-protonated mellitin. For comparison, the collision-activated dissociation spectra of renin substrate and melittin are also presented. The spectra show that surface-induced dissociation provides structural information on multiply-charged peptides at sample concentrations compatible with electrospray ionization. For angiotensin I, renin substrate, and mellitin, surface collisions (100-165 eV) favor a limited number of fragmentation pathways, which are the same as those favored in collision-activated dissociation experiments.

In the case of singly protonated peptides produced by liquid secondary-ion mass spectrometry, gas-phase collisional excitation of large peptides (<3000 Da) produces sufficient fragmentation for structural analysis [1]. Extension to larger peptides is limited by losses in desorption and ionization efficiency and by the partitioning of a limited amount of internal energy to a large number of vibrational modes. Electrospray ionization has gained considerable attention because it is an efficient means of generating multiply-charged ions from large biomolecules, including proteins [2-6]. Although the fragmentation mechanisms for formation of multiply-charged peptides have not been fully elucidated, low-energy gas-phase collisional activation of mass-selected multiply-protonated peptides has been shown to provide structural information [7]. Collision-activated dissociation of peptides between the ESI skimmer cone and capillary can provide an additional method for obtaining sequence information [8,9]. Surface-induced dissociation (SID) is an alternative means of dissociating ions; several investigators have reported SID spectra of singly-charged peptides produced by liquid-secondary ion mass spectrometry [10-13]. We report here surface-induced dissociation spectra of multiply-charged peptides and compare the spectra with those obtained by collision-activated dissociation.

Experimental

The instruments used in this investigation are a simple, inexpensive dual quadrupole mass spectrometer specifically designed for ion/surface studies [14] and a triple quadrupole mass spectrometer (Finnigan TSQ70). Experimental details for the triple quadrupole mass spectrometer have been reported previously [15]. The SID instrument consists of two Extrel quadrupoles (m/z range 0-4000 Da) arranged at 90° , with a surface

positioned to intersect the ion optical path of each quadrupole. The angle of the incident beam is 50° with respect to the surface normal. The surface used in this investigation was stainless steel although alternative surfaces are being investigated [16]. Data were acquired and processed with a Teknivent/Vector Two data system.

Electrospray ionization on the SID instrument was accomplished by using a modified version of the recently published electrospray designs of Chowdhury, Katta, and Chait [17] and Papac, Schey, and Knapp [18]. The samples were dissolved in a 45:45:5 (v/v/v) water/methanol/acetic acid solution at final concentrations of 10-50 pmol/μL. Samples were sprayed, with a syringe pump, through a syringe needle (4-5 kV) toward a metal capillary (170-200 V) at a rate of 2 μL/min. A heater wire in fiberglass sleeving is wrapped around the metal capillary to thermally desolvate the ions. The multiply-protonated peptides were mass-selected by Q1 and allowed to collide with the surface at a selected laboratory collision energy. The product ions were analyzed by Q2. The laboratory collision energy is determined by (i) the potential difference between the skimmer cone and the surface and (ii) the charge state of the ion. For simplicity, the potential difference between the skimmer cone and surface will be listed as ΔV ; the kinetic energy of the collision is determined by multiplying ΔV by the charge state. Good quality SID spectra can be obtained by averaging data for a total sample spray time corresponding to < 500 picomoles; this is higher than the low picomole levels (10-50 picomoles) required for FAB/SID [19] and thus may reflect sample loss prior to Q1, rather than losses in the activation step.

Results

Surface-induced dissociation spectra are shown below for three peptides: doubly-protonated angiotensin I, doubly-protonated renin substrate, and triply-protonated mellitin.

The peptides vary in average molecular mass from 1298 to 1760 to 2848, respectively. For comparison, the collision-activated dissociation spectra of renin substrate and melittin are also presented.

The surface-induced dissociation spectrum obtained for doubly-protonated angiotensin I is shown in Figure 1 (m/z 649=($M+2H$) $^{++}$; $\Delta V=50$). Extensive fragmentation occurs upon SID and results in mainly singly-charged product ions. The series of b-type ions detected allows the assignment of residues 3 to 6. Dominant immonium ions from the tyrosine, histidine, and proline residues are also detected and are indicative of the high energy deposition associated with SID. A systematic investigation of the influence of molecular size and collision energy on the SID fragmentation of singly-charged peptides has shown that, at a given collision energy, the ratio of abundances of high-mass ions to low-mass ions increases with an increase in the size of the peptide [19].

The surface-induced dissociation spectrum obtained for a larger doubly-protonated ion, renin substrate, is shown in Figure 2a (m/z 881=($M+2H$) $^{++}$; $\Delta V=50$). An increase in the abundance of high mass ions with an increase in molecular weight is noted (c.f., Figure 1 and Figure 2a). The series of b-type ions allow the assignment of residues 3-6 and 9 and the series of doubly-charged b-type ions allow the assignment of residues 7-12. Several immonium ions are also detected. No y-type ions are present in the spectrum, which is reasonable because the most basic amino acid is located near the N-terminus of the peptide. For comparison, the CAD spectrum obtained at $\Delta V=30$ for the ($M+2H$) $^{++}$ ion, m/z 881, generated from renin substrate is shown in Figure 2b. The CAD spectrum is remarkably similar to the SID spectrum. It exhibits a series of b-type ions, which allows the assignment of residues 3-6 and 9-10, and a series of doubly-charged

b-type ions, which allows the assignment of residues 7-13.

The surface-induced dissociation spectrum for a triply-protonated, 27-residue peptide, melittin, is shown in Figure 3a (m/z 950=($M+3H$) $^{+++}$; $\Delta V=55$). A series of b-type ions allows the assignment of residues 3-5 and a series of doubly-charged y-type ions allows the assignment of residues 5-9, 12 and 13. Again, low mass ions are of greater abundance than high mass ions. For comparison, the CAD spectrum obtained at $\Delta V=30$ for the ($M+3H$) $^{+++}$ ion, m/z 950, generated from melittin, is shown in Figure 3b. Essentially the same ions are present as those detected in the SID spectrum. Interestingly, the two spectra of Figure 3 (165 eV SID and 90 eV CAD) are very similar to the 565 eV CAD spectrum reported by Barinaga and coworkers [20].

Experiments are in progress to determine the influence of molecular size, collision energy, charge state, and type of surface on the information content of the spectra. Conditions required to produce side-chain cleavage ions of type d and w [21] will also be determined. Peaks corresponding to these ions are present in the SID spectra of singly-charged ions produced by FAB [19], but are not present in the ESI/SID spectra of Figures 1-3.

Conclusions

The spectra reported here show that surface-induced dissociation provides structural information on multiply-charged peptides at sample concentrations compatible with electrospray ionization. The strong similarity between SID and CAD spectra may be the result of partitioning the internal energy to a large number of vibrational modes, such that the effects of different collision energies are not pronounced. Alternatively, multiple sites of protonation within the peptide ion may serve to promote specific fragmentation

pathways. Overall, the results show that surface-induced dissociation is at least as effective as collision-activated dissociation for the structural characterization of multiply-protonated peptides.

Acknowledgements

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Figure Legends

Figure 1. Surface-induced dissociation spectrum for the $(M+2H)^{++}$ ion (m/z 649) of angiotensin I at a collision energy of 100 eV ($\Delta V=50$).

Figure 2. (a) Surface-induced dissociation spectrum for the $(M+2H)^{++}$ ion (m/z 881) of renin substrate at a collision energy of 100 eV ($\Delta V=50$). (b) Collision-activated dissociation spectrum for the $(M+2H)^{++}$ ion (m/z 881) of renin substrate at a collision energy of 60 eV ($\Delta V=30$).

Figure 3. (a) Surface-induced dissociation spectrum for the $(M+3H)^{+++}$ ion (m/z 950) of mellitin at a collision energy of 165 eV ($\Delta=55$). (b) Collision-activated dissociation spectrum for the $(M+3H)^{+++}$ ion (m/z 950) of mellitin at a collision energy of 90 eV ($\Delta V=30$).

% Relative Abundance

40

His

Pro

DRVYIHPFHL

20

b_2

Tyr

b_2

γ_2

a_3

b_3

$(M+2H)^{++}$

a_5

a_6

b_6

a_8

1000

Mass / charge (m / σ)

400

200

800

600

1000

Time

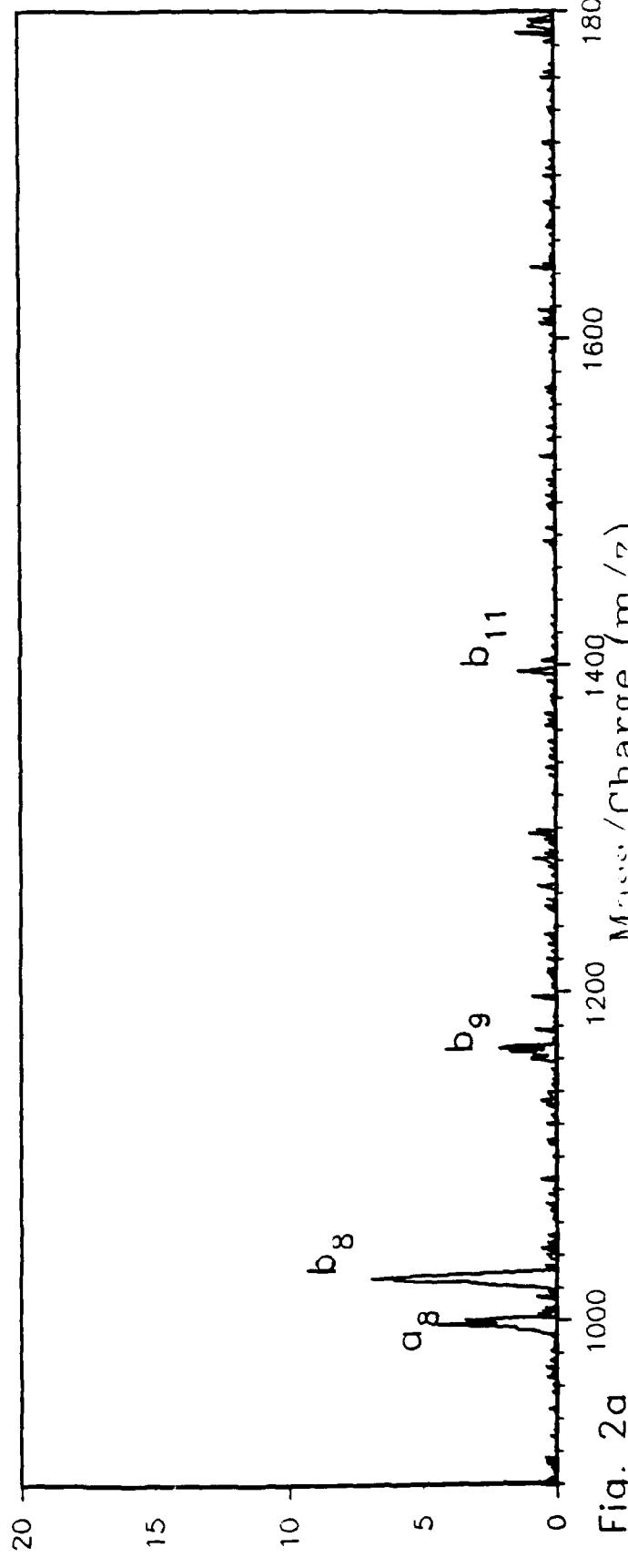
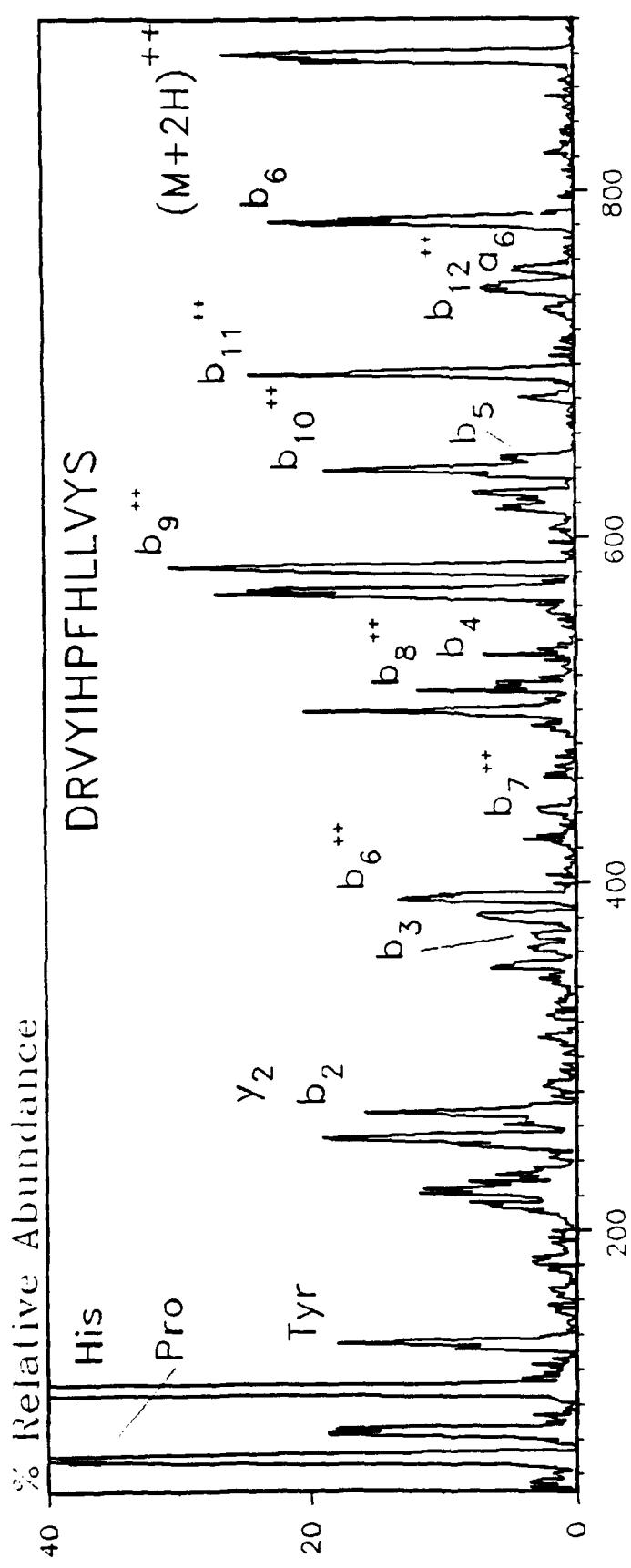


Fig. 2a

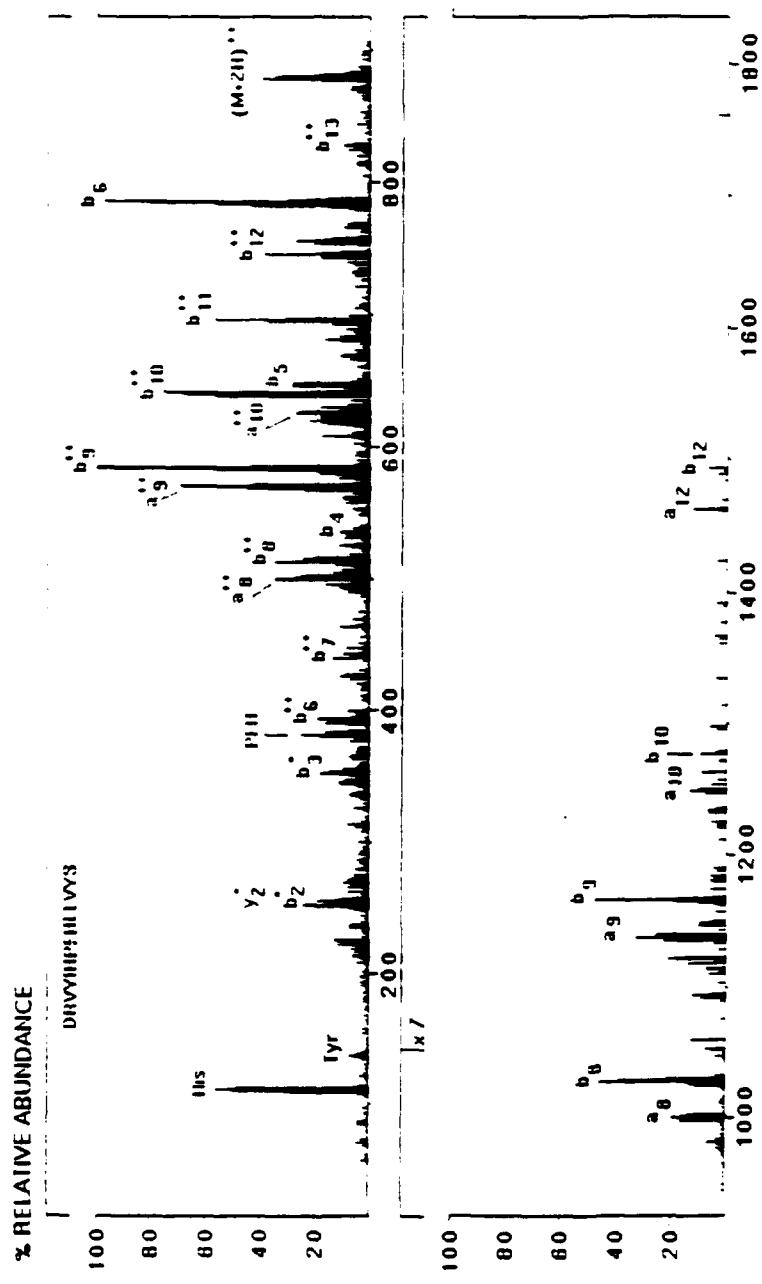
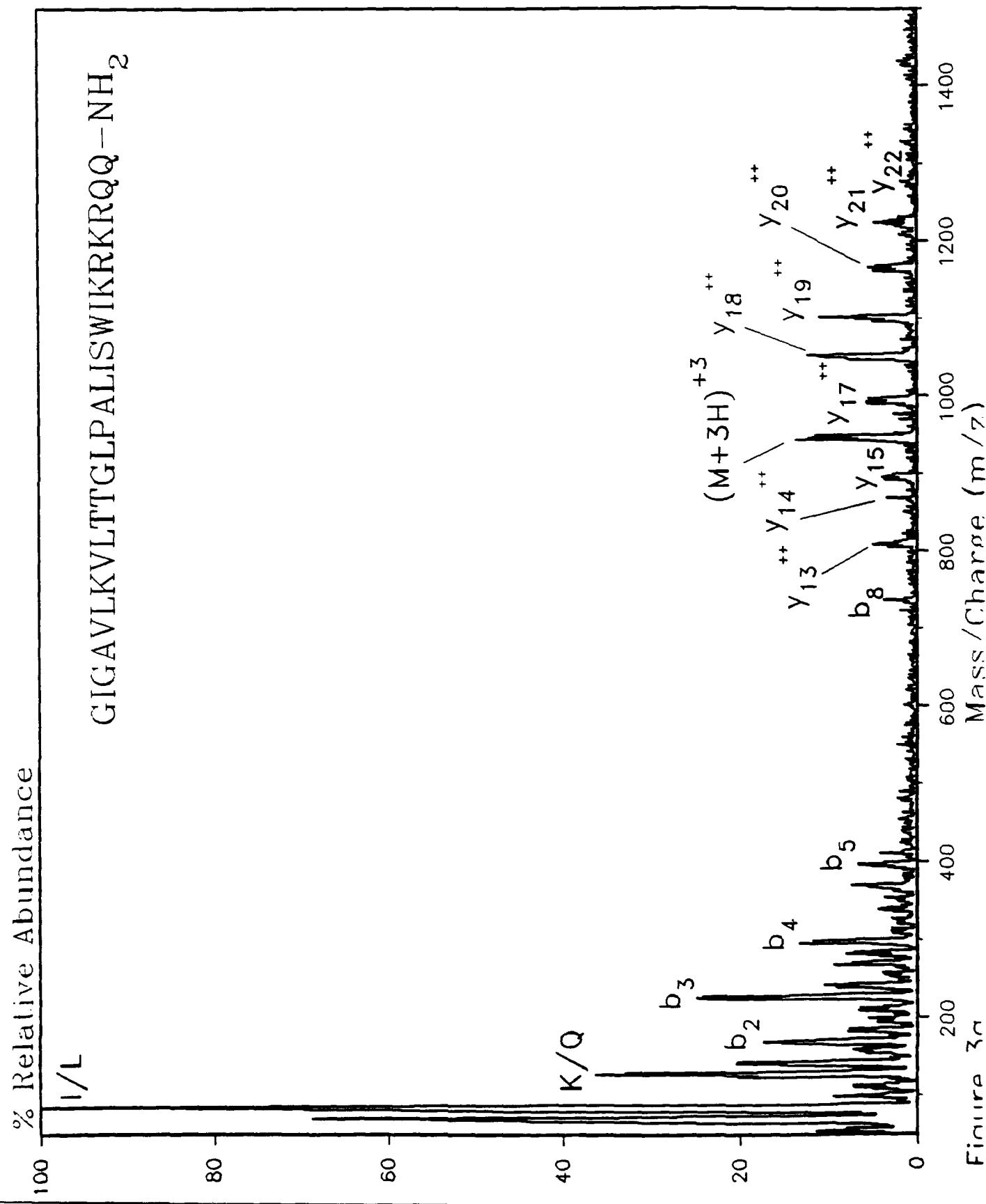


Fig. 2b



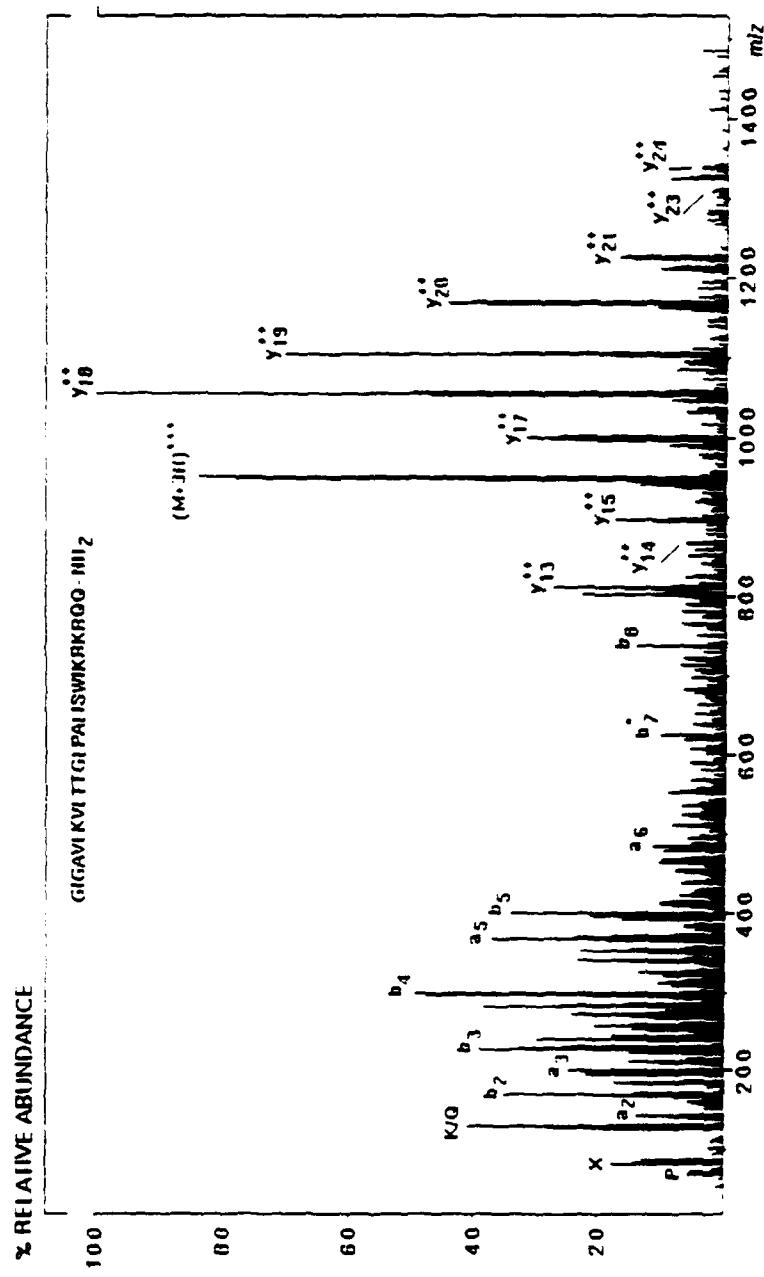


Fig. 3b